

# North Yorkshire Council

## Executive

20 June 2023

### Selby Area Garden Waste Service

#### Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks member approval that:

- i. A subscription-based garden waste service be introduced in the Selby area in line with the rest of North Yorkshire at the harmonised rate.
- ii. Subscriptions open from 03 July 2023 with the charged service beginning w/c 28 August 2023, and a pro-rata rate of £29 be charged for 2023/24.
- iii. Further harmonisation of the garden waste service across the North Yorkshire Council area including charging periods, subscription periods and winter close down based on the proposals for the Selby area be agreed.

#### 2.0 Background

2.1 At a meeting of the Executive on 10 January 2023 it was approved that the rates for garden waste collection across the county be harmonised for the 2023/24 season. A request was made to the District and Borough Councils to implement the harmonised rate and for Richmondshire to implement the pro rata rate due to smaller bin sizes.

2.2 It was also agreed that in the Selby area, where garden waste collection is currently free of charge, a consultation would take place to understand what demand there would be for the garden waste service if it is subject to the same charges as all other areas of the county. The consultation took place between 20 February 2023 and 03 April 2023.

2.3 The collection of garden waste is not a statutory service and under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, the council has the discretion to charge for this service. The legacy district and borough councils of North Yorkshire have all operated a subscription-based service for a number of years, with the exception of the former Selby District Council (SDC).

#### 3.0 Public Consultation

3.1 A public consultation ran from Monday 20 February to Monday 03 April 2023. The consultation was available on the former North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) website with paper copies on request. It was promoted in the local news, on NYCC and SDC social media platforms and via Councillor and Parish Council briefing notes.

3.2 There have been 3580 responses received and 95% said they currently used the council's garden waste service. Of those who use the service, 22% said they would continue to, following the introduction of a subscription-based service. A further 18% said they didn't know.

- 3.3 Respondents were also asked how they would dispose of their garden waste if they didn't subscribe. 51% said they would dispose of it in their rubbish bins, 19% said they would take it to a household waste and recycling centre (HWRC) and 13% said they would compost it at home. Where other areas in North Yorkshire have introduced an additional charge, they have not seen a significant increase in residual waste tonnages.
- 3.4 Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments on the proposal. 1633 comments were received. Themes centred on concerns around an increase in fly tipping, the cost of living, council tax and the perception that the council already makes a charge by selling garden waste to reprocessors. These concerns will be addressed through the comprehensive communications and marketing campaign. A residents information pack will be delivered to all households in the area alongside information on the website and social media channels and at libraries and Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- 3.5 The majority of local authorities across England charge to collect garden waste. There is no evidence to suggest that charging a subscription fee leads to an increase in fly-tipping, which is a criminal offence and liable to enforcement action where appropriate. Most residents either choose to home compost, which is the most environmentally beneficial option, or take their garden waste to a HWRC, which is free of charge.
- 3.6 When we do currently see fly-tipped garden waste it tends to be in much larger quantities than would fit into a garden waste green bin and isn't household garden waste like grass cuttings and weeds. Fly tipping will continue to be monitored and enforcement action will be taken against offenders where appropriate.
- 3.7 Service Options  
A decision was taken by the Executive in January to harmonise the garden waste service across the North Yorkshire Council area and there is a need to standardise certain operational practices including subscription periods and winter closedown. To avoid further future changes, it is recommended that the policies introduced for the Selby area become the standard for the whole North Yorkshire Council area from 2024.
- 3.8 A number of options were analysed in relation to subscription periods for the Selby area and the recommended option is for a pro-rata charge of £29 for 2023/24. Subscriptions will open w/c 03 July with charged collections running from w/c 28 August to w/c 26 February 2024. The overall service will then be harmonised with collections running from w/c 04 March to w/c 02 December 2024.
- 3.9 Because the legacy districts of Craven, Hambleton and Ryedale currently charge based on a financial year this means that residents here have already paid a subscription up to the end of March 2024. To enable a standard charging period to be introduced for the whole council, it is recommended that a pro-rata charge is levied for the Craven, Hambleton and Ryedale areas for w/c 01 April to w/c 02 December 2024 with full harmonisation of charging periods from 2025/26. A separate piece of work is required to ensure that IT and payment systems are designed to accommodate this.
- 3.10 From 2024 it is recommended that subscriptions open across the county in early January and close at the end of October each year. Opening in January allows the bulk of subscriptions to take place prior to annual billing in March.
- 3.11 All other areas of North Yorkshire currently operate a winter close down from December to March. It is not possible for this to take place in the Selby area this year due to contractual obligations, but it is recommended that this is harmonised with the rest of the council from 2024, with a standard annual winter close down across the county from the end of

November / early December to the end of February each year. This will allow clarity of messaging relating to the service.

- 3.12 Attached at Appendix A is a copy of the standard terms and conditions for the service for the Selby area for 2023/24. It is recommended that these become the standard terms and conditions for the service from 2024/25.

#### **4.0 Equalities**

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has been completed (Appendix B), and a full EIA is not required at this time. Any future proposed service changes will be subject to separate EIA screening.

#### **5.0 Finance**

- 5.1 A harmonised charge of £43.50 was agreed by the Executive on 10 January 2023 and it is recommended that a pro-rata charge of £29 be introduced in the Selby area for 2023/24.
- 5.2 If subscription levels are in the range from 10-22%, the council can expect additional income of between £100k and £220k in this financial year. Where subscription services have been introduced in other areas of the council, subscription levels increase year on year.
- 5.3 The cost of implementation of the service is split between an initial capital outlay of £126k and ongoing licensing and software support costs of £18k per annum. In addition to this there are ongoing costs to support the customer service centres of £8k in the current year and an ongoing potential increase of £21k per annum. This is dependent on the subscription service increasing year on year over a 5-year period. However, this is being mitigated through an optimised customer journey, promoting online digital sign up.
- 5.4 As part of the harmonisation of operational service matters, it is recommended that a pro-rata charge is levied for the Craven, Hambleton and Ryedale areas for 2024/25 with full harmonisation of charging periods from 2025/26.

#### **6.0 Legal**

- 6.1 North Yorkshire Council as a Unitary Authority has a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange for the collection and disposal of household waste, and to comply with the waste provisions contained within the Environment Act 2021 and future secondary legislation and statutory guidance.
- 6.2 Garden waste collection is a discretionary service where waste collection authorities are able to make a charge under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012.
- 6.3 It should be noted that a national government decision regarding an England-wide approach to recycling is anticipated, following a public consultation in 2021. This could lead to a cap on charging for this discretionary service.

#### **7.0 Climate Change**

- 7.1 Garden waste collected in the Selby area is delivered directly to a network of composting sites, where it is turned into a soil improver which is spread back on the land. This reduces the need for artificial fertilisers.

7.2 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse climate change impacts arising from the recommendation. If people choose not to subscribe to the garden waste collection service, experience from other authorities shows that residents tend to compost at home instead as there is no corresponding rise in residual waste tonnages to match the reduction in garden waste tonnages, therefore there is little impact on the environment. A Climate Change Impact Assessment is included as Annex C of this report.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

8.1 That the Executive approves:

- i. That a subscription-based garden waste service be introduced in the Selby area in line with the rest of North Yorkshire at the harmonised rate.
- ii. That subscriptions open from 3 July 2023 with the charged service beginning w/c 28 August 2023, and a pro-rata rate of £29 be charged for 2023/24.
- iii. To agree the further harmonisation of the garden waste service across the North Yorkshire Council area including charging periods, subscription periods and winter close down, based on the proposals for the Selby area.

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Background Documents: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Terms and Conditions

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment Screening Document

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment